

## CHAPTER THREE

### The Arts

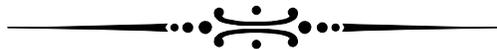
*The objective of the arts is to explore the deeper meanings of the beliefs, traditions, and experiences of the people. Art is the record of the past, the thinking of the present and the hopes for the future.*

**Richard Hill**  
**Native American Expressive Culture**

#### Introduction

Traditionally, for Native Americans, artistic creation was a part of nearly every individual's daily life. Art was not viewed as a separate entity, but rather as an integral part of culture and lifestyle. In fact, most Indian languages do not have a specific word for "art".<sup>1</sup> Creating artistic objects, music, songs, dances, clothing, literature, pottery, wood carvings and other forms of craftsmanship were among the many ways that Native Americans expressed themselves. The art's characteristics have always been a reflection of a tribe's character, customs and beliefs as well as an expression of the artist's individuality.

This artistic tradition has strong historical roots and has continued through every generation of Native Americans; indeed, it is a thread that ties people together across the boundaries of time.<sup>2</sup> While each new generation of artists revisits traditional techniques and methods, they also allow the art to evolve to reflect current culture and incorporate modern techniques. This section of the resource guide provides an introduction to Native American music, literature, art and film.



## Music

Ceremonies, rituals and festivals have always been an integral part of life for Native Americans and music is a cornerstone of these traditions. Anyone who has ever participated in one of the large social, personal and spiritual events known as a powwow, has witnessed the importance of the drum music and singing that accompanies the elaborate dance and dress of the celebration.

The melodies, vocals and instrumentals of Native American music may share similarities across tribes, even as they maintain their regional flavor. The themes of the earth, water, sky, animals and harvesting cycles often dominate Native American songs and chants, reflecting their close ties to the land and nature.<sup>3</sup> In fact, much of the traditional music is intended to be performed outdoors and close to nature — though it can be performed in any setting. Some of the music is created for public ceremonies while some is reserved for private ceremonies — medicine and curing, prayer and other personal endeavors.<sup>4</sup>

Traditional Native American music often involves complex vocals, with both solos and the layering of chorus voices in complex harmonies. As important as the use of the voice is, accompanying musical instruments are also a key component of Native American music. A wide variety of drums and flutes are among the commonly recognized instruments. Unique instruments that add to the distinctive sounds of Native American music include rattles, scrapers, whistles, fiddles, musical bows and clapping sticks.

With traditional music as a foundation, Native Americans have, for decades, blended native musical themes and forms with contemporary forms such as folk, blues, pop, rock, country, reggae and hip-hop.<sup>5</sup> In the 1960s, emerging Native American musicians, such as Buffy Sainte-Marie, crafted songs that addressed the political and social climate of the day. Through the decades, Native American musicians have continued to use their voices to convey their unique experiences to new generations of listeners. While traditional drum groups and a capella singing troupes remain popular today, diverse Native American musicians are producing contemporary music of all types, drawing on growing Native and mainstream national and international audiences.<sup>6</sup>

## Contemporary Musicians

### Cher

Born Cherilyn Sarkisian in El Centro, California in 1946, Cher's unforgettable voice, a best actress Oscar, and a long-running TV show with husband and co-host Sonny Bono turned this Cherokee-blooded woman into a Hollywood icon. Her movies include *The Witches of Eastwick*, *Suspect*, *Moonstruck* and *Tea with Mussolini*. Among her many popular singles are "Believe," "If I Could Turn Back Time," "Take Me Home" and "Just You."

### **Rita Coolidge**

Part Cherokee, Coolidge entered the music scene in the mid 1960s and reached stardom in the early 1970s. Some of her greatest hits were revivals, such as Jackie Wilson's "Higher and Higher," released in 1977, and the Temptations "The Way You Do The Things You Do," released in 1978.

### **Jimi Hendrix (1942–1970)**

Born Johnny Allen Hendrix in Seattle, Washington, in 1942, Jimi Hendrix was one of the greatest guitarists of all time. Hendrix, who was of African American, Cherokee Indian, European and Mexican descent spent much of his childhood with his grandmother, a full-blooded Cherokee Indian. Hendrix began playing in rock bands as a teenager and later formed several bands including Jimmy James and the Blue Flames and the Jimi Hendrix Experience. The Jimi Hendrix Experience recorded the landmark albums *Are You Experienced?*, *As Bold As Love*, and *Electric Ladyland*. Hendrix is remembered for his legendary live performances with other famous rock artists and for changing the way musicians and fans view the electric guitar.

### **Robert Mirabel**

Robert Mirabel, a Taos Pueblo from New Mexico, is an accomplished performer. As a musician, he is a skilled songwriter, flutist, vocalist and drummer. He also makes handcrafted flutes, some of which are on display in the Smithsonian Institution. The author of *A Skeleton of a Bridge*, a book of poetry, prose and short stories, Mirabel is also a painter, poet, playwright, and film narrator. He has performed internationally and widely incorporates his heritage into his work.

### **Buffy Saint-Marie**

Cree-born Sainte-Marie has won national and international acclaim for her music. She wrote the Oscar winning "Up Where We Belong," the theme song from *An Officer and a Gentleman*. In 1995, the Canadian Recording Industry Association inducted her into the JUNO Hall of Fame. Sainte-Marie has also received recognition for her Cradleboard Teaching Project, which brought her the Louis T. Delgado Award as Native American Philanthropist of the Year in 1997.

### **Joanne Shenandoah**

Joanne Shenandoah, an Iroquois member of the Oneida Nation, is a well-known singer, songwriter and composer. She is noted for her original compositions, unique voice and use of both traditional and contemporary instruments to transform traditional Iroquois songs. Her music has been featured on the television show "Northern Exposure," at the Woodstock '94 concert, and at the White House. Shenandoah's most recent CD, released in September 2001, is entitled *Eagle Cries*.

### **Ulali**

Ulali is a Native American a capella trio composed of cousins Soni Moreno (Apache and Mayan), Pura Fe (Tuscarora) and Jennifer Kreisberg (Tuscarora). Since the late 1980s, Ulali has created its unique sound combining traditional roots and contemporary styles, at the same time

inspiring other Native women's musical groups. As an a capella singing group, Ulali is known for its unusual harmonies and wide vocal and musical range, which allow the singers to use their voices to drum, rattle and stomp. Ulali's themes are political, romantic and humorous and their international performances address Native American struggles and accomplishments.

Performances include Woodstock '94, the 1996 Olympics, the 1997 Smithsonian's Folkways 50th Anniversary Gala and the 1999 World festival of Sacred Music.

## Literature

Native American written literature has its roots in the oral tradition of storytelling, which is, in its own right, an art form. Traditionally, storytelling was an art that nearly everyone participated in, women and men, young and old. During the winter, large groups gathered around fires to tell and hear stories of creation, medicine, love, hunts and heroes.<sup>7</sup> And just as storytelling was a communal activity, the heroes of the stories were individuals whose deeds benefitted the larger community.

Native American literature remained largely an oral tradition until the later 19th and early 20th centuries, a time when increasing numbers of Native Americans learned the written English language. During the late 19th century, emerging Native American writers focused their written works on political issues, such as the need to reform the Bureau of Indian Affairs and government policies affecting American Indians. The authors of the early 20th century also reflected upon their experiences as Native Americans in their writing, focusing on aspects of Native American life and the relationship between the American Indian and the United States.<sup>8</sup>

The influence of the oral literary tradition is evident in the style of early Native American writers as well as contemporary authors. The texture of their writing often differs from that of Western literature, as Native American authors are likely to write about multiple characters and themes that move freely through time and place, the conscious and unconscious, without following a linear pathway.<sup>9</sup>

While storytelling remains a popular contemporary art form, Native American literature has evolved from a predominantly oral tradition to include a written one that today encompasses novels, short stories, poetry, and other media. The second half of the twentieth century saw an ever larger number of Native American authors emerge and find success in the mainstream literary community. In 1969, N. Scott Momaday, who wrote about the Kiowa customs, traditions and beliefs, became the first Native American author to win the Pulitzer Prize for his novel, *House Made of Dawn*. In the years following that breakthrough, Native American authors have continued to tell their stories to a broader audience throughout the United States and abroad.

## Contemporary Poets and Authors

### Sherman Alexie

Born in October 1966, Sherman J. Alexie, Jr., a Spokane/Coer d'Alene Indian, grew up on the Spokane Indian Reservation in Wellpinit, Washington, about 50 miles northwest of Spokane. Approximately 1,100 Spokane tribal members live there. Alexie's father is a Coer d'Alene Indian, and his mother is a Spokane Indian. Alexie has published novels, poetry, short stories and a screenplay, and has been described by critics as one of the most talented young writers of our time. His writings include *The Business of Fancydancing*, *Indian Killer*, *The Toughest Indian in the World*, and *Reservation Blues*.

### **Esther G. Belin**

Esther Belin, a Navajo Indian, was born in Gallup, New Mexico, but grew up in Los Angeles. Belin has studied writing at the University of California, Berkeley, and The Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe. In her poetry, Belin addresses issues such as racism, sexism, substance abuse, cultural estrangement, and particularly the disillusionment experienced by Navajo Indians living off the reservation. The contrast between the Navajo lifestyle and the urban setting is a theme of many of her poems, which have been published in anthologies and collections as well as in her book, *From the Belly of My Beauty*.

### **Diane Glancy**

Born to a German-English mother and a Cherokee father who left his Indian heritage behind, Diane Glancy never learned about her Cherokee background as a child. This caused her great conflict while growing up, but she found an outlet in writing. Glancy has written poetry, short stories, novels, essays and an anthology of plays including *The West Pole*, *The Only Piece of Furniture in the House*, *Pushing the Bear: A Novel of the Trail of Tears*, and *War Cries*. Glancy also teaches English at Manchester College in St. Paul, Minnesota.

### **Joy Harjo**

Born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1951, and a member of the Creek Tribe, Joy Harjo learned most of her Indian heritage from her great-aunt. She has studied the writing process extensively, earning a master's degree in creative writing, and is one of the most provocative poets writing today. Many of Harjo's poems explore the challenges and problems facing Native Americans. Among her collections are *She Had Some Horses*, *The Last Song* and *What Moon Drove Me To This*. Harjo also plays tenor saxophone and is part of a Denver-based band, Poetic Justice.

### **Tony Hillerman**

Tony Hillerman was born in Sacred Heart, Oklahoma, and though he is not a Native American, his mystery novels set on the Navajo Reservation are respected by Navajos for their authenticity. Before beginning his career as a writer, Hillerman served in the Army during World War II and was awarded the Purple Heart after being wounded in 1945. Hillerman has won more than a dozen awards for his mysteries, including *The Dark Wind*, *A Thief of Time* and *Coyote Waits*.

### **Barbara Kingsolver**

Barbara Kingsolver was born in 1955 in rural eastern Kentucky, where she grew up on a farm. As a child Kingsolver had a vivid imagination and enjoyed telling stories; it was not until she was much older that she turned her creative energies to writing. In the interim, Kingsolver studied biology as an undergraduate and graduate student, and then worked in a variety of science-related positions before embarking on a career of fiction writing. Though not a Native American, she has been widely acclaimed for her book, *Pigs in Heaven*, a novel about an Indian child, "Turtle," adopted by a single woman who is swept up by the policies and controversies surrounding the Indian Child Welfare Act. *Pigs in Heaven* is a sequel to Kingsolver's earlier novel, *The Bean Trees*.

**N. Scott Momaday**

A member of the Kiowa Nation, Momaday calls himself “the man of words.” In 1969, his first novel, *House Made of Dawn*, won a Pulitzer Prize in fiction, making him the first Native American to win the coveted literary award. Momaday’s works often focus on Kiowa traditions, customs and beliefs, and are greatly influenced by oral tradition. An English professor at the University of Arizona, Tucson, Momaday is also the founder and chairman of The Buffalo Trust, a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of Native American culture. His works include *The Ancient Child*, *Angle of Geese and Other Poems* and *Circle of Wonder: A Native American Christmas Story*.

**Mark Turcotte**

Mark Turcotte, a Native American author of Chippewa and Ojibwe heritage, was raised on the Turtle Creek Reservation in North Dakota, in the migrant camps of the western United States, and in Lansing, Michigan. Turcotte’s poetry collections, which are illustrated by his wife, artist Kathleen S. Presnell, include *The Feathered Heart*, *Exploding Chippewas*, *Songs of Our Ancestors* and *Road Noise*. In addition to writing, Turcotte frequently offers poetry readings, conducts workshops, and speaks at schools, universities and literary festivals throughout the United States.

## **Art**

Traditionally, Native American art — the creation of handmade objects that were both functional and beautiful — reflected the beliefs, customs, lifestyle, and spirit of Native Americans. The art often told a story, making the objects important, not only aesthetically, but also as historical artifacts. Scenes carved or painted onto objects may have depicted particular people or families, animals and images of nature, as well as warriors and battle scenes. Design motifs and symbols were often used by a particular tribe and may have grown out of their sense of community and common spirituality. Whatever their design and content, the scenes were likely to reflect changes in the lifestyles and circumstances of Native Americans, as well as their story of how they solved problems and addressed the challenges of their time.<sup>10</sup>

Painting, carving, pottery, ribbonwork, basket weaving and other forms of craftsmanship and artistry are types of art that have traditionally adorned common objects such as hair combs, clothing, household items and props used in ceremonial dances. As in other branches of the arts, traditional techniques and themes continue to influence contemporary artists, who in some cases try to replicate the practices of their ancestors, and in other cases, have incorporated modern technologies into their work. Their artistry includes painting, sculpture, photography, printmaking, film and video production, jewelry making, clothing, beadwork, ceramics, textiles and quilt making.

Handmade artistic objects continue to be a prominent part of Native American life, highly valued by individuals in their homes and an integral part of other Native American traditions, rituals, and ceremonies. While contemporary Native American artists may be influenced by European and American art, they continue to honor the traditional art of their tribes as they convey their life experiences and world view by expressing beauty and creativity in their work.

## **Native American Art Forms**

### **Beadwork**

Beadwork was probably one of the earliest forms of Native American art and for many tribes, beads and beadwork were a significant part of the culture. The jewelry so often adorned with beads was worn for more than aesthetic reasons:

“Beauty aside, wearing or presenting jewelry had many social, economic, political and religious implications for the Native Americans of the 1600's in southern New England. Jewelry was used to show connection with a particular group. Beads validated treaties and were used to remember oral tradition, as well as for exchange and currency. There were many ritual aspects of beads and pendants used in ceremonies of dance, curing, and sacrifice. Jewelry was also used in many ‘rites of passage’ which individuals passed through in their lives.”<sup>11</sup>

In addition to using beads to make jewelry, beads were also used to decorate clothing and were inlaid into wood objects. For example, tomahawk handles, pendants and Native bread mixing bowls may have inlaid wampum beads to enhance their beauty.

Beadwork is based on a simple technique, since beads lend themselves to being strung on string and cord. Various weaving techniques have evolved over time, with some of the methods resembling textile and basket weaving. The string used can range from animal hides to twisted cord from plants, bark and roots. The earliest beadwork techniques probably involved the simple hand stringing of beads; later this evolved into more complex techniques using tools and looms. European contact introduced new techniques and materials, which Native Americans integrated into their beadwork traditions.

An example of a particularly significant and well-known piece of beadwork is the wampum belt, which consists of rows of beads woven together. The treasured wampum beads were made from polished shells and were once used for jewelry and as currency.<sup>12</sup> In New England, wampum beads were a part of reciprocal gift giving which strengthened the bonds between Native Americans and indicated high status. Beads were often integrated into the elaborate dress of dance ceremonies where beads were sometimes distributed to onlookers.

### **Basket Weaving**

Early European accounts often described the woven baskets and bags used by Native Americans, which included a variety of woven containers including, but not limited to what we would classify as “baskets” today. Their functions varied from storage (taking the place of shelves), to carrying supplies on trips, to sifting cornmeal. Baskets of all sizes, “from a quart to a quarter” were created.<sup>13</sup> The woven containers were constructed of a wide variety of materials using numerous weaving techniques. In addition to baskets, woven bags have always been popular with many Native American tribes.

Twining was a common and relatively simple technique resembling braiding, but with many specific variations on the method. Methods such as splint basketry are more recent additions. Native American weavers made use of diverse materials such as hemp, maize husks, silk or sweet grasses, tree bark and wool, and often dyed the materials in colorful shades. Once the baskets or other containers were woven, they were adorned with paintings of birds, fish, flowers and other images of nature. Later, typographic ornamentation was added to baskets using block stamps to imprint images.<sup>14</sup>

### **Metalwork**

Traditionally, in certain culture areas, Native Americans became skilled metalworkers and silversmiths. As early as the seventeenth century, various kinds of rings were made using sheet metal. One of the applications for their talents was in making jewelry and other ornamental items, such as rings, bracelets, armbands, ear bobs and bands worn around turbans. The

metalwork was often used in combination with beadwork, leather and other decorative adornments.

The artisans worked with metals such as brass and silver and used a variety of methods. For example, to make rings, a long strip of metal could be formed into a hollow tube, then bent into a circle joined by hammering the ends together. The hammering technique made the rings appear virtually seamless. One type of bracelet was made from flat pieces of brass sheet metal. The sheet metal was cut into narrow strips and bent to form a flat “C” shape. The brass was often decorated with curved lines and zig-zag designs.

## **Pottery**

Of all the culture areas, the tribes of the Southwest are best known for their pottery. This was true historically and remains the case today. Traditionally, pottery was used to store, prepare, and serve food as well as to hold ceremonial offerings. By contrast to the Southwest tribes, the tribes of other regions relied more on woven baskets and wood containers.

While artists employ many techniques to create pottery; the coiling method is one of the most common. Using this technique, the potter forms clay into ropes or coils that will be stacked, then shaped upward and outward to get the desired size and shape.

Traditionally, once a piece of pottery was finished, it was decorated; different tribes had characteristic designs and decorations. Common pottery designs included painted cloud symbols, lines, shapes, birds, and animals. Some tribes left a small gap, or “spirit path,” in the lines painted around a pot, believing each pot housed a spirit that needed a way to leave and re-enter the vessel.<sup>15</sup>

## **Contemporary Artists**

### **Otellie Loloma**

Loloma (1922–1993) used clay and paints to make tangible the stories she heard while growing up in the Hopi village of Sipaulovi. Her award-winning work has been exhibited at museums across the nation, including the Museum of the American Indian and the Native American Center for the Living Arts.

### **Gale Running Wolf, Sr.**

Gale Running Wolf, Sr., a member of the Blackfeet tribe who had no formal art training, is a nationally known artist who lives in Billings, Montana. Running Wolf portrays his Blackfeet heritage in scenes of animals and warriors on horseback, created with pencil and acrylic. Running Wolf exhibits at shows and auctions throughout the United States and has works on display in galleries, museums, national parks and in collections throughout the United States, Canada, Europe and Australia. During his years as a full-time artist, he has won 35 awards.

### **Deborah Magee Sherer**

Deborah Magee Sherer, a member of the Blackfeet Tribe, specializes in traditional and contemporary Native beadwork and quillwork. Through her formal education and an internship at the Smithsonian Institution, Sherer learned a great deal about crafting in the “old ways” and traditions of her ancestors. From a member of her tribe, she learned quillwork techniques. Although Sherer uses authentic, traditional materials in all of her craftwork, she also explores more modern, diverse ways of using these materials and techniques. Her work has been featured at Indian Art Northwest art fair, The Heard Museum and the Native American Art Show 2000.

### **Angeline Wall**

Angeline Wall, a member of the Blackfeet, currently resides on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in Browning, Montana. A textile artist, Wall specializes in creating traditional handmade dolls, as well as dressing Barbie and commercial dolls in traditional Native American dress.

### **Philip Beaumont, Jr.**

Philip Beaumont, Jr., a member of the Crow Nation, is a skilled sculptor who strives to portray Native American lifestyles and values in a positive manner. The inspiration for many of Beaumont’s sculptures is derived from the stories and traditions of his Crow ancestors and he believes that creating sculptures is one way to preserve Native American history and traditions. In addition to his artistic endeavors working with sedimentary and metamorphic stone, Beaumont teaches Native American Studies and Art Foundation courses at the University of Calgary in Alberta, Canada.

## **Museums Featuring Native American Art**

### **Amerind Foundation Museum and Archaeological Research Facility**

Dragoon, Arizona  
(520) 586-3666

### **Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art**

Indianapolis, Indiana  
(317) 636-9378

### **Heard Museum**

Phoenix, Arizona  
(602) 252-8848

### **Indian Pueblo Cultural Center**

Albuquerque, New Mexico  
(505) 277-4405

**Maxwell Museum of Anthropology**

University of New Mexico  
(505) 277-4405

**Museum of the Cherokee Indian**

Cherokee, North Carolina  
(828) 497-3481

**National Museum of the American Indian (Smithsonian Institution)**

Cultural Resources Center — Suitland, Maryland  
(301) 238-6624

George Gustav Heye Center — New York  
(212) 514-3700

National Museum of the American Indian — under construction in Washington, D.C.  
(202) 287-2020

**Peabody Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology**

Cambridge, Massachusetts  
(617) 496-1027

For additional information on Native American art, visit the Web site [www.nativeamericanartshow.com](http://www.nativeamericanartshow.com). For additional information on museums featuring Native American art, visit the Web site [www.hanksville.org/NAresources/indices/NA museums.html](http://www.hanksville.org/NAresources/indices/NA museums.html).

## Film

Throughout the 20th century, scores of movies and television features with Native American themes were produced. However, unlike music, art and literature, Native Americans were not active participants in this art form, either behind the scenes or in front of the cameras. Despite some significant successes and critical recognition, the careers of what few Native American producers, directors, writers and actors there were tended to be short.<sup>16</sup>

For example, in a Hollywood career that lasted less than 10 years, James Young Deer, of the Winnebago tribe, produced several commercially successful films before his opportunities as a producer dried up. Similarly, Edwin Carewe, of the Chickasaw tribe, directed a series of well-received feature films during the 1920s, but never directed again. With the exception of Will Rogers, the well-known Cherokee entertainer, no Native American produced a major film until the 1990s.<sup>17</sup> The situation was not much better for those working in front of the camera. Penobscot actress, Molly Spotted Elk, a successful lead in the 1930 film, *Silent Enemy*, was the last Native American actor to be cast in a major film role until 1970.<sup>18</sup>

For decades the American movie-going audience viewed films and television shows portraying Native Americans. For many viewers, these productions served as their main exposure to an unfamiliar culture. Today, many critics believe that because these stories were told and portrayed without the perspective of Native Americans themselves, they created and perpetuated misconceptions, stereotypical images and incorrect historical accounts.

Desiring to “regain control of their stories,” Native Americans struggled for many years to find their place in contemporary American cinema and television.<sup>14</sup> Slow but steady progress was made during the 1970s and 1980s, but perhaps the most significant breakthrough came in 1998, with the release of *Smoke Signals*. Finally, a major motion picture had been completely produced, written, directed and acted by Native Americans. Today, there are dozens of actors and filmmakers working on mainstream films of all types. Many continue to use their craft to tell their own stories of the Native American experience.

## Contemporary Films

### ***Black Robe***

Based on a novel written by Brian Moore and set in the 17th century, *Black Robe* tells the story of a young Jesuit priest who is assigned to go to the Canadian wilderness to convert the Huron Indians. During this stage of first contact between the Jesuit missionaries and the Huron Indians, the priest must overcome many conflicts and personal struggles. Beyond the storyline, the film is noted for its realistic architectural detail and portrayal of the Huron way of life, from hunting to community bonds, to religious practice. Tantoo Cadinal (Metis/Cree) and Billy Two Rivers (Mohawk) are among the Native American actors featured in *Black Robe*.

### ***PowWow Highway***

A member of the Northern Cheyenne tribe and his friend set out on a road trip from Lame Deer, Montana, to Santa Fe, New Mexico, in *PowWow Highway*. Taking the long route through the Dakotas, the pair stops along the way to visit friends and sacred Indian sites. However, the plot becomes secondary as the most notable parts of this film are the two distinctive main characters, their 1964 Buick named “Protector,” and the insight the main characters provide into their community and group of friends. This film can be described as thoughtful, thrilling and serious at times, but it remains a comedy throughout.

### ***Smoke Signals***

*Smoke Signals*, the first commercial movie produced entirely by Native Americans, was adapted from Sherman Alexie’s 1993 short-story collection entitled *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*. Watching this film, the viewer accompanies two young Native Americans on a road trip of sorts, as they venture off the reservation where they were born and raised. Along the way, *Smoke Signals* challenges stereotypes and offers insight into Native American life in an engaging, authentic and humorous way.

### ***Thunderheart***

The plot of *Thunderheart* centers upon an FBI agent assigned to investigate a murder on an Indian reservation in South Dakota. The story was based on actual events that occurred on the Dakota reservations in the early 1970s. The FBI agent is one-quarter American Indian, which adds an element of conflict between his mission and his heritage. Beyond the plot twists, *Thunderheart*, directed by Michael Apted, an experienced documentary director, is known for the stimulating and realistic visual representation of the reservation, from the land to the housing units.

### ***Windtalkers***

Due to be released in June 2002, the much anticipated film, *Windtalkers*, is based on the several hundred Navajo Americans who served as Marines and used their language as an unbreakable code during World War II. The story centers around a particular Marine who is charged with protecting one of the Navajo code talkers, with orders to protect the code itself “at all costs.” The timing of the movie is significant, as President Bush recently bestowed the Congressional Gold Medal on the 29 Navajo code talkers who developed the unbreakable military code that helped the United States during World War II.

## **Educational Videos**

### ***I Am Different From My Brother — Dakota Name-Giving***

The Dakota Sioux celebrate their children’s coming of age with a ceremony in which each child is given a traditional Indian name by their grandparents. This documentary captures this special occasion for a brother and his two sisters, who are eager to learn their Indian names.

***One Water, One Air, One Earth***

This video focuses on Corbin Harney, a spiritual leader of the Shoshone tribe, and explains his tribe's beliefs that man should live in harmony with the environment, that all things are interconnected, and that the planet's survival depends on our interactions with nature.

***Pueblo Peoples: First Encounters***

The Pueblos first encounters with Europeans, beginning with Coronado, are described from the Native American's perspective in this video. Viewers learn how the peaceful lives of the Pueblos were affected as Coronado began the search for gold.

## Endnotes

1. *Native American Expressive Culture*; (c)1994 Akwe:Kon Press and National Museum of the American Indian.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. *Taking Center Stage; American Indian Report*; (c) 1998 Falmouth Institute.
7. *Earth Song, Sky Spirit*; (c) 1993 Anchor Books Doubleday.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Id at 1.
11. *Native American Technology & Art* web site; [www.nativetech.org](http://www.nativetech.org)
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. *Native American Crafts Workshop*; (c) 1982 Fearon Teacher Aids
16. *Smoke Signals: A History of Native Americans in Cinema*; (c) 1998 Ward Churchill
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid

## Suggested Activities

This section contains ideas for activities that may be used in conjunction with The Arts section of the source book. The descriptions of the activities are meant to serve as a springboard and may be adapted for use in your particular setting and with your audience.

### Music



1. The work of contemporary Native American musicians is available through music stores and on-line retailers. Tapes and CDs may be purchased and displayed with other Native American arts and culture items. Several well-known musicians are featured on the Silver Wave Records Web site (<http://www.silverwave.com/native.html>). Examples of contemporary musicians include: R. Carlos Nakai, Tito LaRosa, Robert Mirabel, Joanne Shenandoah, Mary Youngblood, Joy Harjo with Poetic Justice, NDN (Greg T. Walker and Jakson Spires), Brent Michael Davids, and Ulali.
2. Employees may enjoy listening to selected musicians and songs during an employee gathering celebrating Native American Heritage Month or during lunch and other social events scheduled at your site.
3. After circulating a list of suggested recordings, hold a discussion group. Participants may be interested in discussing the Native American influences evident in the lyrics and music.
4. Many Native American musicians have schedules of live performances. Check your local listings for event schedules.
5. Want to learn more about traditional Native American musical instruments? Pictures of a wide array of drums, flutes, rattles and whistles can be viewed on the following Web site: [www.larkinam.com/MenComNet/Business/Retail/Larknet/NativeAmericanDrums](http://www.larkinam.com/MenComNet/Business/Retail/Larknet/NativeAmericanDrums).
6. Listen to audio samples of contemporary Native American music available through the Smithsonian at: <http://www.si.edu/folkways/indian.htm#creation>.
7. Local drum groups and singing troupes may be available for live performances. A listing of recognized champion drum groups, native singing groups and non-powwow style singing groups may be found at: <http://library.lco-college.edu/special/nafilm.html>  
<http://www.glrain.net/drum-grp.htm>
8. Native American festivals are a wonderful opportunity to experience authentic music. Check out your local and regional events calendars. For a listing of powwows and festivals throughout the country, see the NativeCulture.com Web site at:

<http://www.nativeculture.com/lisamitten/powwows.html>

9. To view a map and listing of all radio stations throughout the country carrying AIROS (American Indian Radio on Satellite), go to: <http://www.airos.org/stations/map.html>.
10. Wondering what the “Nammys” are? The Nammys, like the Grammys, are a music awards program, sponsored by NAMA (Native American Music Awards). This year’s awards ceremony was broadcast on October 20, 2001. If you would like to learn about the winning musicians or purchase a compilation CD, call (212) 228-8300 or visit <http://www.nativeamericanmusic.com/index2.cfm>.

## Literature



11. The published work of many contemporary Native American poets is available through libraries, bookstores and online retailers. These texts may be made available at your own libraries or displayed in shadow boxes. Examples of well-known poets and their collections include:  
  
*Joy Harjo (A Map to the Next World, The Woman Who Fell from the Sky, She Had Some Horses, Secrets from the Center of the World)*  
*Esther G. Belin (From the Belly of My Beauty)*  
*Mark Turcotte (The Feathered Heart (Native American Series), Songs of Our Ancestors: Poems About Native Americans)*  
*Sherman Alexie (First Indian on the Moon, One Stick Song, The Man Who Loves Salmon, The Summer of Black Widows, The Business of Fancydancing, I Would Steal Horses)*
12. Specific poems may be distributed to employees for a discussion group. Discussion group participants may be interested in discussing questions such as:
  - ! What insight into Native American culture can be gained by reading the poetry?
  - ! How does this poetry compare and contrast to Western poetry that you have read?
  - ! In what ways do you suppose the poetry reflects the cultural values and beliefs of Native American communities?
  - ! Does the poetry reflect historical events and circumstances of Native American communities?
  - ! How does the poetry reflect the roles of men, women and children in Native American culture?
13. Poems may be used for a poetry reading at a group event. Poll your staff for volunteers to read the poems.

14. Select quotes or brief excerpts and display them on bulletin boards or in your library. Or, distribute them electronically on a daily or weekly basis.
15. The published work of many contemporary Native American authors (or non-Native authors who write about Native American themes) is available through libraries, bookstores and online retailers. These texts may be made available at your own libraries or displayed in shadow boxes.
16. Two books that may be of literary and historical interest are:  
*Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (Dee Brown)  
*Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (Vine Deloria)
17. Learn more about Native American authors. You can learn about their biographies and their relation to Indian Country, view their complete list of works and awards they have won, and preview future projects by researching their personal Web sites.
18. Research Native American authors by using the comprehensive resources of the Native American Authors Project, a part of the Internet Public Library (<http://www.ipl.org/ref/native/>). Here users may browse authors, titles and tribes alphabetically. This Web site provides information on Native North American authors with bibliographies of their published works, biographical information, and links to online resources including interviews, online texts and tribal Web sites.

## Art



19. Ask employees to bring examples of Native American art to work and display the items in a showcase for Native American Heritage Month. Items may include, but are not limited to, pottery, jewelry, clothing and prints.
20. View the Native American Technology and Art Web site: <http://www.nativetech.org/>. This site includes pages dedicated to a wide range of art technologies from beadwork to clay and pottery to porcupine quills and weaving and others. It explains the historical significance of the art form and the region in which it is prominent. It also includes illustrations, explanations of materials and techniques used, as well as resources.
21. Take a photographic tour of firing pottery or try the interactive beadwork designer on the Native American Technology and Art Web site:  
<http://www.nativetech.org/pottery/photofiring.html>  
<http://www.nativetech.org/games/index.php>

22. View a Native American Art Exhibit online at: <http://www.artnatam.com/>. This site features several artists at a time and displays samples of their work, accompanied by the artists' own notes and interpretations.
23. Interested in creating your own Native American style art? Full Circle Videos has a series of how-to videos featuring instructions and demonstrations to guide the viewer through beadwork and other crafts. For additional information, call (800) 301-8009.
24. There are many museums featuring or emphasizing Native American Art throughout the United States. Two well-known examples are the National Museum of the American Indian, NMAI (with the Cultural Resources Center in Suitland, Maryland, and the George Gustav Heye Center in New York), and The Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona.



### Film, Video and Television

25. There are a wide variety of contemporary films that employees may enjoy viewing. Most video stores carry a number of Native American-themed videos.
26. A series of educational videos are available through Lucerne Media, (800) 341-2293.
27. Check your local public television schedule for Native American-themed features scheduled to air during Native American Heritage Month. Examples of programs include:
  - ! *American Cowboys* — Jackson Sundown and George Fletcher overcome color barriers in the sports world before World War I.
  - ! *Hand Game* — An ancient form of Native gambling remains influential in the new millennium.
28. To receive your own copy of *The Vision Maker* (a publication of Native American Public Telecommunications) and other NAPT publications by mail, contact:  
 Native American Public Telecommunications  
 1800 N. 33rd St., Lincoln, NE 68583  
 (402) 472-3522; Fax: (402) 472-8675; E-mail: [native@unl.edu](mailto:native@unl.edu)
29. Interested in bringing a speaker to your site? You will find lists of musicians, artists, writers and filmmakers at: <http://www.hanksville.org/NAresources/>. Reviewing these lists may help you determine whether there are local personalities you could contact to arrange a speaking engagement. If applicable, you may also contact your local Indian Urban Center to inquire about speakers. See the list of Native American Organizations

and Indian Urban Centers on the NativeCulture.com Web site (<http://www.nativeculture.com/lisamitten/organizations.html>) for Indian Centers and related resources throughout the United States. Also consider inviting an Indian judge to speak. See Chapter 9 for a list of judges.